

'No Criminals On Campus!'

"The people ought to fight for the law as they would for their city walls."

—Heraclitus



The CIA should not be allowed to recruit on the Fordham campus. There is, I am afraid, no argument. The CIA has violated and continues to violate the federal code of the United States, the Constitution of the United States, numerous international treaties to which the United States is a signatory, and the United Nations Charter. The United States has been tried and convicted by the World Court because of the CIA's involvement in illegal activities. Until such time as the CIA conducts itself in accordance with the laws of this land and international law, it has no right to enter our campus, for any purpose. We would not allow organized crime to recruit on our campus. We must recognize and state clearly that until such time as the CIA conducts itself in accordance with the laws of this land and international law, it is to be defined, regarded and treated as in fact a criminal organization. It is that simple.

I am aware of many arguments, most of them good, on both sides of this issue. There are strong moral arguments against the CIA; reasonable arguments in favor, based on 'freedom of speech,' on 'realism', on Realpolitik. I am not now interested in pursuing any of them. All are irrelevant in the face of the overriding, fundamental fact - the CIA continues to engage in illegal activities, and so is a criminal organization. As such, it has no place on our campus.

No doubt, the CIA is responsible for the suffering and death of many innocent people. I am anguished when the CIA is found to be designing, constructing, and training brutal police forces in foreign lands. I am appalled when the CIA is discovered supplying torturers with devices and advice. I sympathize with the innocent campansinos in Nicaragua, the mothers of children napalmed in El Salvador, the people of Chile who continue to suffer at the hands of the casually bloodthirsty regime of Pinochet. No doubt, aspects of the CIA are morally bankrupt and pernicious. But, I am afraid, nothing of this pertains to the question of the CIA's presence on campus. What does pertain is the fact that the CIA continues to break the law. It is a criminal organization, and has no place on our campus.

No doubt, one could defend the CIA on moral and political grounds. No doubt the secret police of other governments engage in similar - or worse - activities. But they do not recruit on our campus. No doubt, too, the Sandanista regime is less than perfect. They have curbed individual freedoms and freedom of the press, which, as

an old fashioned Jeffersonian Democrat, I find distressing. No doubt, there are many governments which regard themselves as above the law, and which are threats to the security and freedom of people everywhere. Unfortunately, our government is amongst them. The CIA is breaking the law.

We all know this to be true. Our government has admitted it. At first, it claimed its support of the contras was to enable them to stop the "flow of arms" from Nicaragua to El Salvador. This, at least maintained the pretense, however thin, of legality. Our government has since dropped this mask. It now admits, publicly, that it is the design and aim of the United States government to overthrow, through the use of violence, the government of a sovereign nation. That our government no longer feels it necessary to present the appearance of legality is frightening. The public debate has shifted from the legality of supporting the contras to merely disagreeing over how many tens of millions of dollars should be given to these professional killers. This is alarming; nothing can be more threatening to the liberty of a free people than their own loss of respect for the law. What the CIA is doing in Nicaragua not only endangers the lives and welfare of innocent Nicaraguans, but the liberty of the American people.

This is not a partisan issue. When the government of our country displays flagrant disregard for the law, we are neither Democrats nor Republicans, neither on the left nor on the right, but self-governing citizens of a free republic, ruled by law. When the government of a free people violates the law, the citizens, if they at all cherish their own freedom, have not merely the right, but an obligation to resist.

Consider the issue this way: let the Congress of the United States pass legislation sanctioning the violent overthrow of sovereign governments and the murder of innocent women and children. Let the United States' Ambassador to the United Nations present the case to the General Assembly. Let him convince a majority of the nations in the world that such activities should be lawful, and amend international law to make them so.

After this has occurred and the laws of the United States and the international community have been amended so as to make lawful the violent overthrow of sovereign governments and the premeditated murder of innocent women and children, let us open our hearts and arms to the CIA, and allow them to enter our campus.

Until, however, this has occurred, we must regard the CIA as an illegal organization, and keep our campus free of its criminal taint.

On this issue, let us not debate morality. Let us not

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argue over the relative merits or horrors of communism and capitalism. Let us not attempt to evaluate the extent of the Soviet threat or the influence of American capital. Let us not argue about free speech. Let us not be concerned about the far too many ways in which far too many innocent people are suffering horribly in far too many places. Rather, let us insist simply that our government abide by the laws of the land. Let us insist that, if our government believes it necessary to engage in the violent overthrow of sovereign governments and the murder of innocent women and children, that it publicly and with due process make such activities legal. Let us state firmly and publicly that until such actions are legal, our campus will have nothing to do with those organizations which commit such actions.

The issue is straightforward. The CIA is a criminal organization and has no place on our campus. On this issue we face no moral conundrums, no partisan disputes, no political

nuances, no ideological struggles. Either this country is ruled by law or it is not. If we wish to remain a free people in a nation ruled by law, then we must recognize that when the government of our nation does not abide by the law of the land and international law, it is engaging in criminal activity. And such activity its citizens cannot support and are obligated to try to prevent.

Let us recall the spirit of Jefferson. In his first Presidential Inaugural Address, he emphasized his belief that free people can be trusted to govern themselves under the rule of law, and that this form of government is "the only one where every man, at the call of the law, would fly to the standard of the law and would meet invasions of the public order as his own personal concern." The CIA has invaded and violated the public order, and the Fordham University community should be personally concerned. The alternative is tyranny.

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